

USS Enterprise CVN-65

U.S. Second Fleet / NATO Striking Fleet Atlantic Flagship



A bottle of champagne shattered on the bow of the awesome new warship, USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65), breaking the silence of an anxious crowd at Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, Newport News, Virginia. It was Sunday morning, September 24, 1960, when Mrs. William B. Franke, wife of the former Secretary of the Navy, christened the eighth USS ENTERPRISE, bringing to life the longest, tallest and mightiest warship to ever sail the seas.

At the commissioning of ENTERPRISE, the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, Secretary of the Navy John B. Connally, Jr., called it a worthy successor to the highly decorated seventh USS ENTERPRISE of World War II. "The Fighting Gray Lady, as it was called, served in such well-known battles as the raid on Tokyo and the Battle of Midway." Secretary Connally went on to say, "The new ENTERPRISE will reign a long, long time as queen of the seas."

ENTERPRISE made its maiden voyage under the command of Captain

Vincent P. DePoix, Jan. 12, 1962.

In October 1962, ENTERPRISE was dispatched to its first international crisis. ENTERPRISE and other ships in the Second Fleet set up a “strict quarantine of all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba.” The blockade was put in place on October 24, and the first Soviet ship was stopped the next day. On October 28, Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles and dismantle the missile bases on Cuba.

ENTERPRISE made its second and third deployments to the Mediterranean in 1963 and 1964. During the latter deployment, on May 13, the world’s first nuclear-powered task force was formed when USS LONG BEACH and USS BAINBRIDGE joined ENTERPRISE. On July 31, the three ships were designated Task Force One and sent on Operation SEA ORBIT, a historic 30,565-mile voyage around the world, accomplished without a single refueling or replenishment.

The Big E transferred to the Pacific’s Seventh Fleet in November 1965 and became the first nuclear-powered ship to engage in combat when it launched bomb-laden aircraft in a projection of power against the Viet Cong on December 2, 1965. Its hot decks launched 125 sorties on the first day.

In all, ENTERPRISE made six combat deployments to Southeast Asia from 1965 to 1972. Between combat tours, ENTERPRISE returned to Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in 1970 for an overhaul and refueling.

When ENTERPRISE made its seventh Western Pacific (WESTPAC) deployment in September 1974, it became the first carrier to deploy with the new Tomcat fighter plane. During the deployment, in February 1975, ENTERPRISE was called on to help in evacuation of Saigon. During Operation FREQUENT WIND, Big E aircraft flew 95 sorties.

The ship made its eighth and ninth WESTPACs in 1976 and 1978. It sailed to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in January 1979 for a 30-month comprehensive overhaul. ENTERPRISE made its 10th, 11th, and 12th WESTPAC deployments in 1982, 1984 and 1986.

When ENTERPRISE deployed in 1986, it became the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to transit the Suez Canal. It then entered the Mediterranean for the first time in over 22 years.

In April 1988, ENTERPRISE, on its 13th deployment, was assigned to escort reflagged Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. ENTERPRISE began its 14th deployment in September 1989. In early December,

ENTERPRISE participated in Operation CLASSIC RESOLVE, President Bush's response to Philippine President Corazon Aquino's request for support during the coup attempt.

In March 1990, ENTERPRISE completed its highly successful around-the-world deployment by arriving in Norfolk, Virginia. ENTERPRISE had successfully and safely steamed more than 43,000 miles from its long-time homeport of Alameda, California. In October, ENTERPRISE moved to Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company for refueling and the Navy's largest complex overhaul ever attempted.

ENTERPRISE returned to sea September 27, 1994, and on June 28, 1996, began its 15th deployment. The Big E enforced no-fly zones in two of the world's most critical areas, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR) and Iraq (Operation SOUTHERN WATCH).

Following a four and a half month maintenance period at Newport News Shipbuilding and a comprehensive work-up cycle, the ship departed for its 16th deployment in November 1998. From December 16-20, 1998, Big E and Carrier Air Wing THREE participated in Operation DESERT FOX, expending more than 725,000 pounds of ordnance against military targets in Iraq.

The battle group also conducted operations in the Adriatic Sea and prepared for possible NATO military intervention in the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo. The ship returned to Norfolk in May 1999 and completed a six-month ESRA.

ENTERPRISE and Carrier Air Wing EIGHT deployed in April 2001, marking the ship's 17th overseas deployment. Team ENTERPRISE participated in several multi-national maritime exercises between port visits to Spain, France, Italy, England, Portugal, and Greece. Subsequently, the ship spent two months in the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH and Maritime Interdiction Operations. ENTERPRISE aborted her transit home after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 and steamed overnight to the North Arabian Sea in direct support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Big E once again took her place in history by becoming one of the first units to respond in a crisis with her awesome striking power. Big E expended more than 800,000 pounds of ordnance during the operation. ENTERPRISE returned to her homeport at Naval Station Norfolk, November 10, 2001.

On January 7, 2002 ENTERPRISE entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for a scheduled one -

General Characteristics, *Enterprise*

Builders: Newport News Shipbuilding Co., Newport News, Va.

Power Plant: Eight nuclear reactors, four shafts

Length, overall: 1,101 feet 2 inches (335.64 meters)

Flight Deck Width: 252 feet (75.6 meters)

Beam: 133 feet (39.9 meters)

Displacement: 89,600 tons (91,037.91 metric tons) full load

Speed: 30+ knots (34.5 miles per hour)

Aircraft: 85

Ship: [USS Enterprise \(CVN 65\)](#), Norfolk, Va.

Crew: Ship's Company: 3,350 - Air Wing 2,480

Armament: Two [Sea Sparrow](#) missile launchers, three [Phalanx](#) 20 mm CIWS mounts

Date Deployed: November 25, 1961 (*USS Enterprise*)